THE BAPTIST MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY, 1809.

"Whatever is designed to fit *every thing* will fit nothing *well*."
DR. JOHNSON.

"Names are intended to distinguish Things." Our Work is called THE BAPTIST MAGAZINE because it is intended to be a Repository for the Baptists' use.

Sketches of Baptist History.

SECTION 1. MISSION AND HISTORY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

WHEN it pleased Jehovah to choose the family of Abraham, and to distinguish them from all other Nations by the excellence of their civil code and the worship of the true God, he made them keepers of the divine oracles; and in them they had the revelation of his purposes respecting future ages. The voice of prophecy had long been silent among them when Zacharias, the father of John, *executed the Priest's Office before God;* but they had been taught to expect a new dispensation, a kingdom which should never be destroyed. This kingdom was introduced among them by John the Baptist, by whose ministry the new Œconomy was begun. So that the Baptism of John is called *The beginning of the Gospel*—The time from which the New Testament dispensation is to be computed. *The Law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached.* This took place in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, and Annas and Caiaphus were high priests.

From the days of Noah to this period, good men had existed under many disadvantages. They were generally individuals mixed and confounded with a multitude of very different Characters, in social and civil circumstances. Those who served God in spirit and truth had never yet been A PEOPLE. But John was sent to *preach the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*, and thus to *make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* This Œconomy, thus introduced, was

so substantially different from the preceding, which had admitted all sorts of characters who were the offspring of Abraham, that multitudes, who came forth to be baptized of John, were rejected with holy indignation; the preacher warning them to *bring forth fruits worthy of repentance*, and not rest their claim to the ordinances of a spiritual kingdom upon their carnal descent from Abraham; for that NOW *the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit must be cut down and cast into the fire.* Of this new dispensation John proclaimed Jesus as Lord, *whose fan is in his hand and who will thoroughly cleanse his floor:* at the same time professing himself to be only his messenger, employed, indeed, to go before him, *but not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes.*

John, it is said, was born at Hebron, and was doubtless trained up in the strictest habits of piety, for his parents *were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* His entrance into the world was attended with such extraordinary circumstances, that they *were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea*, and *the people laid them up in their hearts, saying, what manner of child shall this be?* How he was employed in the Country where he abode till the day of his shewing to Israel; whether he made any acquisitions in human literature; whether he lived single or married; whether he possessed any property, or like the Saviour, had his portion with the poor; are enquiries that can never be answered, for the sacred historians have written nothing concerning them.

But they thought it of importance to establish the fact that he had divine authority for what he did, that his mission was from heaven. He neither entered upon the work himself, nor was he directed thereto by any of the ruling powers, civil or ecclesiastical, nor did the people invite him to it; but the *word of God came to him in the wilderness*, as unto the ancient Prophets of Israel. Three of the Evangelists remark that the character and ministry of this extraordinary man were foretold by the prophet Isaiah, and the fourth declares he *was a man sent from God*, which testimony is confirmed by Jesus Christ, who taught that John's Baptism *was from heaven and not of men.* So truly is every branch of the Gospel dispensation founded purely on divine authority, that the prophecy of Daniel is herein exactly fulfilled, and the God of heaven has *without hands* set up a kingdom to stand forever.

When John was about thirty years of age, he entered upon his ministry in obedience to the divine call. He left the hill country and came to the plains of Jordan, proclaiming the near advent of the Messiah, and preaching the Baptism of repentance. He entered freely into conversation with various classes of his hearers, and gave them such directions as were adapted to their characters and circumstances. To the Soldiers he said, *Do violence to no man;* he exhorted

the tax-gatherers to avoid *exaction*, and instructed the people in general to be kind one towards another. *Let him that hath two coats impart to him that hath none, he that hath meat let him do likewise;* and finally, he directed them all to Jesus, as to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the World, in the manifestation of whom the object of his ministry was accomplished. His raiment was plain, he lived abstemiously, and his whole deportment was grave, serious, and often severe. In his doctrine he was not *a reed shaken by the wind*, but, in delivering the message he had received from God, he acted with the firmness and decision of a man who was conscious his authority was divine. Such was the first Baptist. Multitudes from the provinces and from the cities flocked to hear him, and *all* held him as a prophet, and such as renounced their former sinful ways and believed his testimony concerning Christ, were baptized by him *in the river Jordan*, but the pharisees and lawyers should be excepted, for they *rejected the counsel of God* against themselves, and were not baptized of him.

While John was preaching and baptizing at Bethabara* beyond Jordan, various opinions were entertained respecting him, and as the people were in expectation of the promised Messiah, all men mused in their hearts whether John were the Christ or not, and the Jews of Jerusalem sent a deputation of priests and levites to ask him *who art thou?* and to enquire of him concerning his mission, and the reasons of his ministry and baptism. He freely answered all their questions, declaring he was not the Christ, but the person spoken of by Isaiah, sent to prepare the way of the Lord, who was then standing among them, but was as yet unknown. When John had made an end of baptizing the people, Jesus came and was baptized, and was manifested to Israel, John bearing record that he was the Son of God.

It is impossible to ascertain by what means John obtained access to Herod, but it is probable that Herod heard him more than once, and being pleased with his ministry, *did many things* that John recommended him to do. But half-way measures were not approved by this preacher of righteousness. He knew it was in vain for Herod to do many things while he lived in any one sin. He therefore made full proof of his ministry, and reproved the king for living in adultery with Herodias his brother Philip's wife, in language suited

* Bethabara signifies a passage-house, and such there were on both sides the river near the fords, and it is probable they were houses to accommodate and direct travellers in times of low water, and ferry-houses for the convenience of passage, when floods and high waters rendered boats necessary. No places could be chosen more convenient for baptism than these. Here was a gentle descent into water of sufficient depth; here were houses of accommodation; and fords were public roads. It did not become the majesty of a divine Institute to shun the public eye when it first appeared in the world.

to the state of a man who had probably felt somewhat of the powers of the world to come, *It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.* Herodius was exceedingly enraged with John for this plain dealing, and *would have killed him*, but tho' she prevailed to have him cast into prison, she found some difficulty in putting him to death. Two things opposed her wishes in this respect. The dignified firmness and stern virtues of John had, in all probability, impressed Herod with so deep a respect, that his mind regarded him with a kind of sacred reverence, so that the tyrant recoiled at the thought of taking away his life. Besides this, Herod *feared* the resentment of *the people*, for he knew *the multitude held John as a prophet.* Herodius therefore watched for an opportunity that might prove favourable to her design. Such an one she found on the king's birth-day, and surprized him into the perpetration of a deed that did violence to his conscience and has loaded his memory with an eternal reproach. The History is related at large in the Gospels. How dreadful is the state of a country where any one man is superior to the laws, and can do what this absolute king did! Whether he really *was exceeding sorry*, or only pretended to be so, the injustice was the same, *he sent an executioner, and commanded the head of the prophet to be brought*, and the life of John fell a sacrifice to resentment which had been excited only by his fidelity.

The alarms of a guilty conscience pursued Herod ever after this, so that when he heard of the fame of Jesus he exclaimed, *It is John the Baptist whom I have beheaded, he is risen from the dead!* Certainly, John the Baptist will rise from the dead, and Herod the tetrarch must meet him before an impartial Judge, who will reward or punish each *according to the deeds done in the body.* Already the Judge hath declared in favour of John that *he was a burning and shining light. Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.*

Whether John's Baptism was sprinkling or pouring on water, or immersion in water, may be determined chiefly, tho' not wholly, by the meaning of the word baptize. A learned man may satisfy himself by his own knowledge of the Greek language; but the unlearned are obliged to trust to the best evidence they can obtain from the testimony of others. To these latter it may suffice to observe that the word is confessedly Greek, that native Greeks must understand their own language better than any other persons whatever, and that they have always understood baptism to signify dipping; and therefore from the first appearance of Christianity among them to this day, they have always baptized, and do still baptize by immersion. This circumstance is an authority for the meaning of the word baptize infinitely superior to that of all the Lexicographers in Europe: so that an honest man, who is obliged to rely upon the testimony of others, and who baptizes by immersion, because the Greeks do so,

understands a Greek word exactly as the Greeks do themselves; and in such a case they are unexceptionable guides, and their practice is, in this instance, safe ground of action.

It was for just and noble reasons, worthy of a liberal and enlarged mind, that Jesus estimated John so highly as to pronounce him as great a man as had been born of woman: to which he added, *the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.* It was a comparison between John and those who went before him under former dispensations; and between John and those who should succeed him in the new œconomy. He was greater than his predecessors, because he first introduced among the Jews an association of virtuous characters, a *kingdom of heaven* upon earth; he was less than the Apostles, his successors, for, under the direction of their Lord, they enlarged the plan, and united Jews and Gentiles into societies formed expressly for instructing the ignorant and reforming the vicious, for the improvement of the mind in religious knowledge, cultivating in the heart spiritual affections, and regulating the life by a holy watchfulness over one another; by these means establishing personal excellence, and exhibiting a tendency to unite all mankind in one family of universal love. The man, who under God, gave the outline of a design so sublimely pure, ought to be reputed one of the first characters among men. How great then must he be, the latchet of whose shoes this greatest of all prophets was unworthy to unloose.

Z.

Mr. Editor,

The subjoined address was written by my very worthy predecessor, Mr. Thomas Hopkins, with a design to read it to the church at Devizes, Wilts, under the pastoral care of Mr. Sloper, to whom he was an assistant, when he had determined to renounce the principles of Infant-baptism, and to be baptized by immersion on a profession of faith. When it is known that he was afterwards remarkably useful in the Church at Eagle Street, one hundred persons joining it during his pastorship, a period but of two years and a half, and that while he lived he was much esteemed by persons of all denominations, and died at the early age of 29 years, (26 Nov. 1787) greatly and deservedly lamented by his people; it may, perhaps, lead some others, who are halting between two opinions, resolutely to assert their sentiments, casting themselves and families on the providence of him who has never left or forsaken any, who, from a principle of love to him, have left and forsaken their old connections, or might have been left or forsaken by them. With my best wishes for prosperity to attend your undertaking,

New North Street,
Nov. 1, 1808.

I am, Sir,
Yours respectfully,
JOSEPH IVIMEY.

My dear friends,

I presume the far greater part of you are already apprized of my reasons for detaining you at this time, and this consideration renders it the less necessary to say so much as I might otherwise think it right for me to say.

My present situation, as a public character, I think you must all acknowledge, is in many respects very delicate and trying, and the task I have now before me is of such a disagreeable nature, that nothing but the clearest conviction of its being my indispensable duty, could support me under, or cause me to persevere through it; and as this is the case, I hope I shall have your friendly and candid attention while I endeavour to proceed.

Liberty of conscience, or the right of private judgment, in matters of religion, as professed Protestant Dissenters, we must all acknowledge to be inviolably sacred, every professing Christian, consequently every Minister of the Gospel, has an indisputable right to judge for himself, what doctrines, and what conduct are most agreeable to God's holy word, which is always to be considered as the only invariable rule of our faith and practice; nor do I apprehend that any public preacher is accountable to any, but the most high God, for the doctrines he teaches, or the duties he recommends. But notwithstanding I think this to be true, yet I readily acknowledge that every church or society of professing christians have a right to enquire what are the sentiments of their minister, both with respect to the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel. And if at any time a minister should see cause to alter his sentiment, either with respect to his doctrine or practice, I consider it to be his duty to make the same known to the people among whom he preaches, as soon as he conveniently can, so that they may determine among themselves whether it be right for them to continue to sit under his ministry or not.

From hence it follows that it is my indispensable duty to inform *you* what are my *present* sentiments respecting the divine institution or ordinance of *baptism*. I suppose you are somewhat surprized that any alteration should take place in my mind on this subject. But I presume your astonishment will in a measure lessen when I assure you that for the space of seven years after I first made a profession of Religion (I desire to mention it with shame and humility) I never spent one hour in thinking on the subject. Having received my first serious impressions among the Pædo-baptists, I thought all was right, and consequently troubled myself no farther about it. It is now about a twelve-month since I first took the matter into serious consideration.

I know there are some who strongly suspect that it is by the persuasions and intrigues of the Baptists that I have been drawn over to their Party, but I solemnly declare to the contrary; they have always

studiously avoided entering into any conversation with me on the subject, unless I first began, and I must take the liberty to say that if any reflections are cast on the Baptists on account of my conduct, they will be illiberal and unjust.

I was first led to a close study of the subject by considering, that if Baptism was an ordinance of divine institution, and of perpetual use in the Church of God, as we all believe it is, then I was not only personally concerned in it as an individual, but, as a public character, it would become my duty to vindicate and recommend it. And if infants were the proper subjects, and sprinkling or aspersion the proper mode, then it would be right for me, on proper occasions, to justify the conduct of those who attend to such a practice, especially as my being in connection with such persons, was, at least, a tacit acknowledgement that I was of that opinion. It was then I began to lament the impropriety of my conduct in having been a professor of religion, more especially a public preacher, so long, without ever duly examining the arguments on either side of the question. However, as I knew it to be a subject of much controversy, I was determined to give it a fair investigation, and though I am free to acknowledge that when I first set out with this design, I was secretly inclined to hope the scale of evidence would preponderate in favour of the present popular practice of Infant aspersion (for you must all be sensible that my interest, my connections and present sphere of acquaintance would all conspire to excite such a wish) yet I hope I can say that I have made it a matter of earnest prayer, again and again, that I might be entirely divested of all prejudice and party spirit, and that the Lord would graciously guide me into the way of truth, and not suffer me to go astray either to the right hand or the left.

In order to do the subject that justice which its importance demands, I have read the most approved authors on *both* sides the question, and have endeavoured with no small diligence, to consider and compare the arguments and objections that both parties have deduced from scripture and antiquity: and in so doing I have been surprized, and in some measure grieved, to see the weakness and fallacy of those arguments which are offered in support of infant baptism. But as it was my desire not to call any man master upon earth, nor subscribe to the creed of any man, or set of men, without examining it for myself, I have therefore, by the help of my concordance, turned to, and considered all the passages in the new testament that speak of, or refer to baptism. The result of these my researches and inquiries is a firm belief and persuasion that *true believers*, or persons professing faith in Christ, are the *only proper subjects*, and that *immersion* is the only *scriptural and apostolic mode of baptism.*

I forbear entering into the merits of the cause at this time, and must content myself with thus declaring my sentiments unto you

as I am not permitted publicly, amongst you, to assign my reasons for espousing such sentiments. Indeed it was my intention at first to say but a *very few words* on that head, in order to shew that I acted from principle, lest it should look like a design to draw others over to my way of thinking; than which nothing could be farther from my mind.

It gives me peculiar pleasure, when I consider that I have the testimony of my conscience to support me in saying, that I have never made use of any arts or intrigues, in order to form a party or to cause divisions in this church. So far from it, that you yourselves must bear me witness, that I have ever carefully avoided entering into conversation with any member of this Society on the Subject, and for this reason, lest they should think I wished to make them proselytes to my sentiments, and so make my own conduct appear the more plausible.

But not to detain you too long; as it appears to me that Baptism is an ordinance of divine institution, that persons professing faith in Christ are the proper subjects, and that immersion is the only scriptural mode; you will not wonder that I should consider myself an unbaptized person, and consequently that I shall think it my duty in obedience to my Lord's command, and in imitation of his great example, to attend to that ordinance as soon as I conveniently or consistently can.

I hope this part of my conduct will not be the means of depriving me of your affection and esteem, which hitherto I have had the happiness to possess, or of causing any animosities to take place between us. Surely we may continue to love as brethren though in this respect we differ in our judgment, and even though you should not think it right to continue me in the situation in which I now am as a minister among you.

I own the idea of parting is, on many accounts, to me exceedingly painful, and happy should I be if it could, by any means, be agreeably prevented: but I fear I cannot reasonably expect it, when I consider that honesty constrains me to tell you that for the future, I cannot, consistently with the dictates of my conscience, remain intirely silent on the subject.

The mean and unhallowed arts of sophistry and dissimulation I despise and abhor; openness and transparency I admire in all men, especially in Ministers of the Gospel. And then I must ingenuously acknowledge that henceforward I shall consider baptism, as well as the ordinance of the Lord's supper (for I see no reason why one should be exalted above the other) as a part of the counsel of God, which it is my duty to reveal, and not keep back in my public ministrations. I hope I shall never be suffered to introduce it on improper occasions, as no one, I believe, can be farther than myself from thinking that it is, by any means, available or essential to salva-

tion. Yet I dare not treat it with the indifference which too many *have* done, and which too many *still continue to do*, to the no small dishonour, I apprehend, of the infinitely wise and gracious Redeemed, whose institution we all acknowledge it to be. I hope, my dear friends, you have too much regard for me, to wish me to act in such a manner as to violate the sacred rights of conscience, or to bring guilt upon my mind, which I should do, if I were to act contrary to my sentiments, to please any man or any set of men.

To conclude, if after you have seriously and deliberately considered the matter among yourselves, you should unanimously desire my stay among you, I hope I shall esteem it a pleasure to serve you according to the best of my abilities; but if you should otherwise determine, you have only to inform me of it by the proper persons, in a friendly manner, and I shall quietly and peaceably withdraw; and rather than you should be put to any inconvenience, I will, if agreeable, continue to preach for you, as I have hitherto done, until you can furnish yourselves with an agreeable supply.

And should it be the case that we must part, I hope I shall retain the same affection and esteem for you as ever. The kindness of the Church, and of the people attending divine worship here in general, and of the generosity of some particular individuals, I hope I shall never forget, but ever gratefully remember. And, however the Lord may see fit to dispose of me, may he send you a minister to preach the word of life among you, with whom you may have less trouble and care than you have had with me.

I have now only to request an interest in your prayers, that I may be enabled to tread the path of duty and leave all events and consequences with him who doth all things well. And in return, I hope I shall be enabled to pray, that the Lord may bless you with abundance of prosperity, and that you may increase with all the increase of God: for I trust I can say without any dissimulation, *Grace be with all them* (whether Baptist or Pædo-baptist) *that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.* Amen and Amen.

On Internal Religion.

Mr. Editor,

I conceive that no subject is more worthy of our attention, as men and as christians, than the operation of God on the human mind. On this, we believe our everlasting happiness to depend; and on this, equally, must depend whatever measure of real happiness we enjoy in the present life. Yet, I apprehend that this subject does not obtain, even from real christians, the degree of at-

tention which deserves and demands. I do not, indeed, pretend, that it ought to be the *only* matter of our concern. I consider the glory of the divine perfections, as the ultimate purpose of *God*, in the Creation and in the Redemption of Mankind; and therefore, as properly forming also *our* ultimate object. This is to be promoted, not merely by what passes (if I may use the expression) between God and ourselves, but by what passes between ourselves and others, who cannot see into our hearts. Hence when we are finally justified before angels and fellow-men, our words and our wishes, will be brought to the test. But these can only be acceptable with God as they spring from the heart; and this will only produce good fruit as He *works in us to will and to do*. Our first concern, therefore, surely is, to attend to his work in our souls. This is our proper employment. No one can do it for us: and, whatever we may be doing for others, if we do not this for ourselves, we can do nothing as it ought to be done.

Thus, our *prospects* revert to our own walk with God. So does every important *retrospect* that we can take. Do we look back to the eternal counsels? We can know nothing of them, but so far as they are revealed; and we find, that *whom God foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son;* that they are *elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*. Thus, when the Messiah was announced, his name was called Jesus (יהושע) because he came *to save his people from their sins*. When he entered on his ministry among the Jews, they were exhorted to *repentance* (μετανοια, a change of mind, not mere "reformation" as Dr. Campbell improperly translates it) because *the kingdom of God was at hand*. And what was this kingdom?—One that could not be seen (or understood) without a renewal in the Spirit of our minds: one that consists in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

All therefore, past, present, or future, that relates to salvation, centres in our own hearts. This is so far acknowledged, that I believe all genuine Calvinists, as well as all pious Arminians, concur in regarding a radical change of the principles and dispositions of the mind, as essential to final salvation. But I am not without apprehension, that the former at least (whom I believe to constitute a large majority of real Christians in Great Britain) restrict their concern too much to the *commencement* of that important change, which the scriptures usually insist on, not merely as permanent, but as *progressive*. When I converse with fellow christians, I usually find them more intent on ascertaining whether they ever *were* born again, than on experiencing the present vigour and growth of a divine life in their souls. And the sermons which I hear, more commonly aim at the awakening of sinners, than at the edification of believers; or if the

latter be professedly the object, it seems more to regard their establishment in religious opinions, than their advancement in the proper influence of these on our affections toward God and fellow creatures.

Far be it from me, to depreciate the intrinsic importance of these objects; which I would only oppose, when *substituted* for present, vital, progressive, godliness. That spiritual change which takes place in all who are "in Christ," must have a *beginning* in every one: and although that commencement happily occurs so early in some, that they cannot recollect its period; and in others, is effected so gradually, that they cannot describe the means by which it was accomplished; yet the greater part of our congregations, it is to be feared, remain strangers to it; and I should think a sermon defective, that was not adapted to *their* necessities. So, with respect to religious sentiment; although I do not expect any very important benefit to be produced by dwelling on those about which the most pious Christians in all ages have differed, yet those in which they have unanimously agreed, may be considered as stamped with the image and superscription of God, and are certainly powerful motives to true holiness. But are we always to remain at the place of breaking forth; always to be laying again the foundation of repentance toward God, and faith toward Christ, and not to go on to perfection, or at least to press toward it?

The term *perfection*, perhaps, may startle some of your readers, and excite their suspicion that the writer is a Methodist; that is, a Wesleyan. I confess, that the term is nearly as unusual in the mouth of a Calvinist, as those of predestination and election are with Arminians. But ought things to be so? Are not all these terms scriptural: and if so, is it not taking from the word of God, to leave them out of our conversation, our sermons, or our religious writings? By no means, do I wish one, or the other, to be adopted as watch-words of a party, to be used at random, or in a manner that would tend to their abuse. No, let us ascertain their scriptural meaning; let us use them in their proper sense, and to their proper purpose; and then, if others will hear, let them hear; if not, let *them*, not *us*, forbear. What I have already said, may suffice to shew, that it is not as inoperative opinions, that I wish these, or any sentiments, to be discussed: nor do the Scriptures ever handle religious sentiments in that manner. They usually introduce doctrines for the sake of practical application; and they never dismiss them without it.

The deficiency which I have intimated, must be distinguished, however, from a failure of urging to the practice of outward duties, whether private or social. It lies deeper, and reaches to the heart; and not only to the principle of conduct, but to the inmost thoughts and affections, as they refer to *God in Christ reconciling the world*

to himself, and not imputing their sins to them. It relates to that intercourse with God, which transforms us to his own image, strengthens us with his own might, and makes us partakers of his own blessedness. It is impossible to find terms stronger than those which the scriptures use, on the subject of Christian experience. The *promises* respecting it are exceedingly great and precious. The *precepts* are no less, than "pray without ceasing; rejoice evermore; in every thing give thanks:" yea, says St. Paul, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." He *prays*, that the Ephesian believers "might be strengthened with might in the inward man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that being rooted and grounded in love, they might, with *all* Saints, be able to comprehend the vast dimensions of the love of Christ which surpass all merely human conception; and that they might be filled with all the fulness of God." *Precedents* of such attainments, also, are not wanting. Not only Paul could "do all things through Christ strengthening him," but even the converted gentiles to whom Peter wrote, though they had never seen Christ, yet "believing on him, rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Where are we *now* to look for such instances of peace and joy in believing? And why is it that *we* come so far short of the primitive patterns? Is the Lord's arm shortened that he cannot save? Is his ear heavy, that he should not hear? Has the blood of Christ lost its efficacy to *purify our consciences from dead works to serve the living God?* Is the residue of the Holy Spirit's influence exhausted? Surely, it is in our own affections that we are straitened. May it not be said to us, *Ye have not because ye ask not?* We do not *expect* great things, therefore we do not *obtain* them. We seem to suppose, that a sense of pain and weakness, is the only symptom of spiritual life to be manifested in *this* world; and that doubts and fears are to be cherished as inseparable companions on genuine faith. Instead of emulating the spiritual triumph and joy described by Paul, *Romans* viii, 14—16; we content ourselves with the wretched captivity which he depicts, from the 16th to the 24th verse of the preceding chapter.

A spirit so grovelling and dastardly, produces the worst of consequences to the success of the Gospel. The children of this world are wiser, in *their* way, than the children of light. They are panting for happiness; and eagerly striving after those objects which they suppose to be capable of affording it. Are they likely to listen to a voice which threatens to take those comforts from them, and to give them nothing in return but dejection and distress? If we tell them that *the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace;* will they believe us, when our conduct, our conversation, and our very appearance, bear an opposite testimony? No; they will struggle hard, like the infant, to keep their baubles

in their grasp, till we can exhibit something to them sufficiently alluring to make them willingly loose their hold.

If people are brought from their attachment to the world, and led to pay a serious attention to religion; how is their steadfastness to be secured? Numerous are the instances, of persons who have for many years attended on the ministry of the Gospel, seemingly with seriousness and earnestness, without ever attaining to solid peace and lively joy. They at length meet with an antinomian preacher, or writer. He sets them at rest, and elates them with confidence: and though it be on the most unscriptural and irrational ground, yet they eagerly build on it; because they have not been taught to expect something better. For a time, they are at least more free from misery, than they had been before; and they usually enjoy the relief of venting on others, by censorious and malignant tempers, that uneasiness, which, while confined to their own bosoms, preyed on their minds.

Would not our exertions to spread the Gospel around us, and throughout the world, naturally be more animated, as well as probably more successful, if we more sensibly and habitually enjoyed the precious fruits which the scriptures assert it to yield? The person who merely *believes* that a medicine, which he has long used, will, some time or other, remove his complaints, cannot be expected to recommend it to his neighbours with that zeal, which another person, who daily *felt* its efficacy, would testify for its extensive use. A belief that the Gospel is essential to the everlasting happiness of mankind, leaves us, indeed, without excuse, in neglecting means of diffusing it: but should we not engage in this work in a very different manner, if we could, from daily experience, assure others of its efficacy to establish the soul in solid and permanent happiness, amidst every earthly vicissitude, infirmity, and affliction?

The importance of a peaceful, just, and beneficent conduct, in our concerns with fellow creatures, is generally acknowledged by christians. It is thus, alone, that we can manifest ourselves to be the servants and friends of Christ. But is it to be expected, that our lights will shine, with a steady and lively brilliance, before men, if they be not supplied by the unction of the Holy Spirit abundantly poured into our hearts? To urge on Christians, the necessity of *adorning in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour*, without unfolding to them the stores of divine grace, whence their strength, their consolation, their inward adorning, is to be derived: is to resemble Egyptian task-masters, rather than messengers of glad tidings: and to aim at a blameless and exemplary conduct ourselves, without a supreme care to walk daily in the light of the Lord's countenance, is unlikely to avail; and at the same time exposes us to the snares of pleasing men more than God, and of burning incense to our own drag, instead of giving the glory to him.

Finally, if the *attainment* of heaven be worth our fervent pursuit, the *anticipation* of it, likewise, must be so. What *worldly* man is there, that does not avow his wish to go to heaven when he *dies?* The Christian demonstrates the sincerity of his desire for heaven, by the course of his conduct in this life. But how inconsistent with the value which he places on heavenly enjoyments, is it, for him to rest without that foretaste and earnest of them, which the word of God encourages us to expect on earth! We are assured of acceptance and assistance, through the grace that is in Christ. We have not to work out a righteousness of our own, to recommend us to God; but to look to Jesus as *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the World.* Let, then, every faculty of our minds, every part of our conduct, be directed to the great purpose of *realizing* his salvation. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing, that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Mr. Editor,

Who that remembers the amiable and excellent MR. PEARCE, but would wish to cherish the highest esteem for his character, and feel gratified by whatever might tend to bring him again to our view, and inscribe his name afresh on our hearts? I am happy to inform your readers, that a *new edition* of his *Memoirs* has been called for and lately published, and which has been enlarged by some additional Letters, together with the interesting Memoranda of his last illness and death, which had been appended to the Funeral Sermon delivered by Dr. Ryland. The Extracts which will appear in your present and future Numbers, Mr. Editor, with your permission, are taken from Letters never before published, and which were addressed to an intimate and highly respected friend of Mr. P, whose name frequently occurs in the Memoirs. Some of them were written in the early part of their acquaintance, and are purely Letters of friendship; yet there is so much in them that savours of Christ, and bespeaks the heavenly-mindedness of the writer, that they cannot fail to be acceptable to the friends of true religion, especially those who have personally known the author or are acquainted with his biography.

EPENETUS.

No. I.

September 1, 1790.

"Genuine friendships are seldom formed in haste; but there is no general rule without some exceptions. The uniform feelings of my

heart since I parted with you tell me so. Accept, my dear friend, the avowal of my sincere attachment; accept my acknowledgements for the repeated acts of kindness which have so lately distinguished your conduct towards me. May a gracious providence make those requitals to which I am inadequate; that as the pleasures of social intercourse with others have been pursued by you, yourself may never mourn the absence of that refined bliss which the communion of kindred minds inspires.

"You were informed before you left Warwickshire of the day on which the sacred union was expected to take place between me and the dear people in Cannon Street, namely, Aug. 18. The day arrived, and we were publicly joined in gospel bonds.— Rev. Dr. Evans delivered a very faithful and affectionate charge, from 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Rev. Rob. Hall, sen. addressed the people in a manner equally suitable and affectionate, from Deut. i. 38. Mr. Fuller offered the ordination prayer on behalf of the pastor, and Mr. Ryland for five deacons who were at the same time set apart to their office. —Nearly thirty ministers were present. The service was admirably conducted: it was a very solemn, interesting, and affecting season to many. We all enjoyed it, because, I trust, we enjoyed God in it. Myself and others much wished for the presence of our good friend: it would have added to our joy, and we hoped it would have been no small addition to his own. But we are always best where providence directs us: by and bye we hope to be all present with the Saviour. If grace bring us there at last, we shall not regret the momentary departures from one another which we realize below. This thought often supports me under many transient removals. It was attended with no small degree of pain, that I was called to leave my beloved charge almost as soon as I became their pastor, (the monday after) and that for six sabbaths; but it was a prior engagement and unavoidable. May the chief Shepherd take care of them in my absence, and keep them holy, humble, spiritual, affectionate, prayerful, and thankful."

No. II.

Birmingham. Oct. 26. 1790

"Your friendly and affectionate letter, my dear sir, was received in due time, with much pleasure. Your silence had created fears, which a sight of your epistle quite annihilated. We do not love to be forgotten by those whom we esteem, and my regards for you made me wish to preserve an interest in your remembrance. I hope you remember me not only at the writing-desk, but at the mercy-seat. The idea of interest with those who have interest with God encourages me in many a gloomy hour, and supports under many a painful fear. If God's wrestling Jacobs wrestle for me, I have no doubt but they will prevail.

"I feel much obliged by your friendly admonitions and judicious cautions, and hope to profit by them. You have travelled longer in the wilderness than myself; your experience therefore must be greater, and your advice the more valuable. Go on, my dear sir, to caution and exhort me. I will not charge you with assuming "the preacher's place;" but rather thank you for discharging the highest offices of christian friendship.

"I have now been returned from Devon above a fortnight; through mercy, I found my Birmingham friends well, and our union seems still to promise mutual happiness. Lately I visited Alcester. We entered on the useful subject of experimental, heart religion. I was joyfully satisfied to find that my friend was no stranger to it. The conversation has added tenfold strength to the bands of my attachment, and sent me home, forgetting the pains of parting, in ardent gratitude to my heavenly father. "It is possible," you say, "that I may be called to give up a beloved Sarah." † Yes, it is possible; but to tell you "how my mind feels at this time," is not possible. I hope never to be put to the trial. If I am, from heaven alone I must expect support, under one of the greatest trials on earth. I pray God that his will may be done; but as one said, "I need pray again for strength to bear answers to my own prayers!" In the prospect of every painful providence I wish to confide in the words of his grace who has said, "As thy day is so shall thy strength be."

Wallingford, Nov. 25, 1808.

To the Editor,

The following, I should hope, would be interesting and profitable, if inserted in the Baptist Magazine. I am, Yours,

R. LOVEGROVE.

Extract of a Letter written to a Baptist Minister in Hertfordshire by his friend, who went from London to New-York, in America.

Dear Brother,

I know not what the Lord will do with me, but tho' I was much attached to this city, I have made up my mind to leave it, and move into the Country; where I trust the Lord will direct my steps. I have bought 1000 acres of land in the State of Ohio, about 500 miles from New York, and if I am spared to go thither, I hope it will be a mean of spreading the dear Redeemer's name in that western world. On some accounts it will be very painful to leave this place, for we have had a blessed revival of the cause of Christ. I hope I have been a christian these 15 years, yet I never saw any

† Mr. P. was not yet married.

thing like what has passed here the last 18 months. One Sabbath last summer we had 36 baptized, and there have been baptizings at one of the three churches in this town, every sabbath for many months past.

It would do your heart good to see the dear souls, from 11 years old and upwards, coming forwards and with much feeling, acknowledge themselves poor miserable sinners, unworthy of mercy. One night I shall never forget on this side the grave. After preaching on a week evening, we sing a great many hymns, and sometimes between the hymns our brother gives a word of exhortation, for the comfort of the poor mourning souls. While he was speaking, I saw several young persons, at a distance, very much affected. I went up to them and said, well my dear young friends, are you concerned about your never dying souls? One of them (about 14) as she lifted up her hand, saw her father, who stood by me, he was a godly man, she sprang off her seat, and ran up to her father, and, with her arms clinging round his neck, cried, O my father, my father, what must I, what shall I do to be saved? I am lost, I am undone forever! The others, the more I talked to them about the suitableness and willingness of Christ to save poor self-condemned sinners, were so much the more pricked to the heart, and wept most bitterly. *That*, I think, was the most interesting evening I ever enjoyed: I suppose there were not less than 40 or 50 in a flood of tears, some for sorrow, and some for joy, it was 12 o' clock that night before all the people were dismissed.

The devil and the formalist call us mad-men and enthusiasts. We are greatly blessed with very valuable Ministers. The people here are very fond of singing, and I believe the Lord has greatly owned and blessed it to many souls. One hymn, in particular, has been greatly useful, which I therefore send you. Many times when we have been singing it, half the society has been in a flood of tears, and poor sinners have been convinced of their awful condition. I have enjoyed such sweet opportunities in seeing souls brought to Christ that sometimes I have hardly known whether I have been in the body. There are now many young people under distress of mind, whom I hope the Lord will bring out in his own time.

There has been a great revival among the Baptists in New England States, and at Philadelphia, and at a great many places within 50 or 60 miles from New York.

HYMN referred to in the foregoing Letter.

1. Awak'd by Sinai's awful sound,
My Soul in bonds of guilt I found,
And knew not where to go;
O'erwhelm'd with sin, with anguish slain,
The sinner must be BORN AGAIN,
Or sink to endless woe.

2. Amaz'd I stood, but could not tell
Which way to shun the gates of hell,
For death and hell drew near;
I strove indeed, but strove in vain,
The sinner must be BORN AGAIN
Still sounded in mine ear.

3. When to the law I trembling fled,
It pour'd its curses on my head,
I no relief could find;
This fearful truth increas'd my pain,
The sinner must be BORN AGAIN,
O'erwhelm'd my tortur'd mind.

4. Again did Sinai's thunders roll,
And guilt lay heavy on my soul,
A vast unweildy load;
Alas! I read and saw it plain,
The sinner must be BORN AGAIN,
Or drink the wrath of God.

5. The Saints I heard with rapture tell
How Jesus conquer'd death and hell,
And broke the fowler's snare.
Yet, when I found this truth remain,
The sinner must be BORN AGAIN,
I sunk in deep despair.

6. But while I thus in anguish lay,
Jesus of Naz'reth pass'd that way,
And felt his pity move;
The sinner, by his justice slain,
Now, by his grace, is BORN AGAIN,
And sings redeeming love.

7. To heaven the joyful tidings flew,
The Angels tun'd their harps anew,
And loftier notes did raise;
All hail! the Lamb who once was slain,
Unnumber'd millions, BORN AGAIN,
Will shout thine endless praise.

The tendency of the Gospel to promote human happiness illustrated.

Part II. The suitability of its Discoveries.

"And thou Religion! soul transforming flame,
(Let earth thy power—let heaven thy praise proclaim)
Whoe'er's possessed of thee, could wish no more,
And without thee a Crœsus must be poor.
Come then, Religion! and the toiling hind,
Shall more than bread in thy embraces find;
Thy precious balm distilled upon his heart,
His wants subside—his sorrows all depart."

ALLNATT.

GOD IS LOVE. This is the attribute which has led him to consult in all that his mind has devised, or his hand has wrought, the unbounded happiness of his creatures. It was to gratify the infinite benevolence of his heart, that he gave us existence, that he dignified that existence with reason, and enstamped it with immortality. In the allotments of his providence—in adapting our situations in the world to the faculties and tastes with which he has endowed us, and in the ten thousand ways in which he has provided for our present convenience and happiness, the same glorious attribute is illustriously displayed; and at such recollections, the ingenuous mind is disposed in the language of grateful feeling and sublime adoration, to address the fountain of all good, *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness. The Heavens are crowned with thy glory, and the earth is full of thy praise.* But it is a truth, than which nothing can be susceptible of more rigorous demonstration, that the Religion of the Gospel is, and has ever been, the grand means of raising the happiness of man to its utmost possible height. It is only through the agency of Religion—it is only as it is understood, and as the human character is formed under its influence, that man rises to that dignity, and attains to that felicity, of which his nature is capable.

In a former number we illustrated the tendency of the Gospel to promote the happiness of man, by considering the infallible certainty of its principles, it thus relieving the mind from the darkness and horror of uncertainty and doubt, upon subjects confessedly of supreme importance. We shall here attempt to come to the same conclusion by considering, *The suitability of the discoveries which the Gospel brings to our view.* The discoveries of religion, as they are of the sublimest order, are also of a nature the best possible suited to man, whether we consider his nature, or his situation. In

illustrating this idea we are inevitably led to some reflections upon ourselves, and the more accurately we learn to conceive of our own characters, as existing without the Gospel, the more shall we be convinced of our obligation to adore God for that Religion with which he has blest our world; a Religion, all whose discoveries are so admirably suited to man. It need scarcely be said, that man has awfully revolted from God. The fountain of living waters he has forsaken, and has sunk into a condition the most wretched and forlorn. A rebel in God's dominion, he has exposed himself to the just displeasure of his Sovereign, and what is, if possible, a still more awful consideration, is morally incapable of returning to him aright. All the divine attributes seem to rise in tremendous array against him, and it appears inevitable, that the law which he has so grossly dishonoured, must spend its curses upon him: and the authority of God, which he has so daringly wounded and insulted, be exerted in his condemnation. From no quarter does the least glimmering of hope arise. It appears impossible that the divine Being can treat him with clemency, consistently with the honour of his character, and the glory and security of his government. Oh what must be the feelings of one under the influence of these convictions, and his mind unirradiated with the revelations of the Gospel! What must be the state of his mind whose eyes are just sufficiently opened to perceive the thick darkness that surrounds him, but cannot through this gloom, discern a pardoning God? With a countenance of anguish he looks around him, and as he looks, enquires.—"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? What shall I do to be saved? What course shall I pursue to appease the anger of God? Me miserable! which way shall I fly, infinite wrath, and infinite despair? With an eye streaming with sympathy, oh look at the untutored Indian. See his parched lips, his lacerated feet. Behold the blood pouring from his wounds. Look at the fearful and shivering tortures he inflicts upon himself, to obtain, if it be possible, some cheering view of the divine clemency. Oh to such, how grateful would the gospel sound! With what a listening ear, with what dumb amazement, and thrilling delight, must they stand whilst salvation by Christ is announced to them: whilst they receive the news of pardon, and are brought clearly to understand, by what stupendous means it becomes possible for man to be just with God. Oh how transporting the tidings, *God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but obtain eternal life.* Surely, as well as their feelings would permit them, they would say to their

fellows, "Erect no more splendid altars, offer no more costly sacrifices, take no more tedious and harassing pilgrimages, wound your bodies no more. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He came expressly to seek and save the lost. The mountain of Calvary has been stained with the blood of the Son of God, that blood that must cleanse from all sin; and from the cross a voice proceeds to cheer and exhilerate a guilty and wretched world, IT IS FINISHED. Oh heavy-laden sinner, here it is thy wounded spirit must be healed: here it is the mind finds its repose. Here the tortured conscience finds its peace and comfort. It is at sounds like these, that the dead arise, that the trembling captive bounds into liberty, and leaps that he is free. This is the grand discovery of the Gospel; the glorious peculiarity of the Religion of it: Considering man, then, as guilty and condemned, how cheering to his spirit, and oh how suited to his character, is the discovery of salvation by Christ. A scheme so divine in its arrangements, so complete in all its parts, as at once to meet all our fears, and silence forever our most anxious forebodings.

In the limits of a paper like this, it is not possible for us to enlarge as we could wish, upon the particular adaptation there is in the discoveries of the Gospel, to the character and situation of man. Let it suffice to observe that as we are ignorant, guilty, polluted and enthralled, Christ is made unto us of God, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.*

But we may consider man not only as a *guilty* being but also *as distinguished from all inferior orders of creatures by the immensity of his desires and the impossibility of those desires being satisfied with present good.* In this situation, the Religion of Christ is a system admirably *suited* to him. The soul of man is too capacious to be confined within the limits of this lower creation. A spark of the Deity who is universal being, it recognizes its nature even in its prison-house, and feels that it is imprisoned. It is perpetually struggling to burst its fetters, to dart beyond its limits and be free. It looks abroad, but in this "visible diurnal sphere" can find nothing on which to feed appropriate to its nature, and therefore languishes and droops, when it is capable of being raised to unmeasurable heights of glory and bliss. Etherial and divine in its origin, it can only live and flourish amidst spiritual objects and the sublime contemplation of immortality. To a being of such an order how adapted are the revelations of a Religion which brings *life and immortality to light*, which reveals God as the supreme good, as the dwelling place of all generations; and by diverting the mind from every thing unworthy and low, directs it to him who is all glory and perfection. In him, as in its centre, the soul finds rest, and can never be so completely conscious of its dignity and happiness as

when thus devoutly addressing the omnipotent, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on the earth I desire besides thee.*

As Vanity is characteristic of every thing below the Sun, and man has within him that restlessness of desire which the whole creation refuses to allay, and which intimates eternity to him, the Religion of the Gospel comes to his aid. It meets his capacities and desires, by unfolding to his view a boundless prospect; by exhibiting in the most enchanting lights, all the beauties of immortality, and inviting him to their possession. Here our desires meet with suitable objects, and our capacities with an adequate range. Thus friendly to man is the Gospel of Jesus.

That system which brings to our wondering view discoveries not only so divinely bright, but so *suited* to man, under every possible form of character in which he may be considered, must refine and extend the limits of his present enjoyments, and be the means of conducting him forwards to remote and boundless bliss. And could we select words at once expressive of the mingled feelings of deep commiseration, sovereign contempt, and decided abhorrence, they should be applied to those who employ their talents in degrading this Religion, in attempting to shake the foundations of our belief in its authority: who would glory in crumbling the Heaven-reared fabric into dust, and triumph over the universal desolation of human hope. "These herd together: the common damned shun their society, and look upon themselves as fiends less foul."

T. E.

Mr. Editor,

I was much pleased with the Considerations on the State of Backsliders, which appeared in your last. I should be equally gratified with the writer, to see "the practice of our Churches, in this respect, brought nearer the divine rule." As a mite towards such an object, I now transmit you an Extract from the Circular Letter of an Association which assembled at Chipping-Norton a few years since; the Sentiments of which I shall be glad to see more widely diffused thro' the medium of your publication.

I am, with respectful affection, Yours,

ZENO.

We have hinted at the New Testament directions, for our conduct respecting Offenders:—and here, dear brethren, we have much cause of sorrow; here it is that the fine gold becomes dim. Though scandalous offenders are not suffered to hold Communion with our Churches, and considerable attention is paid to *warn the unruly*; yet Primitive Discipline, and some instances of Modern Practice

bear little resemblance to each other. The former was for reclaiming wrong doers, and the restoration of such as had turned aside,—the latter sometimes embrace no better object, than how to get rid of a Character become disagreeable or disgraceful to the Society. Hence what is called discipline, which should be cherished with mutual Confidence, as the sign of mutual regard, is, in many cases, become an object of dread and aversion, and considered as a token of displeasure! Brethren, these things ought not so to be. True discipline is none other than a mutual walk according to the rule of discipleship, *the law of Christ*, which directs us to bear each others burthens, of which those arising from folly or guilt are doubtless the most grievous. An Apostolic precedent, contrasted with a common case, will explain the difference we lament. At Corinth a Member of the Church fell into a grievous offence, such as had never been heard of before among the Gentiles; according to the Apostle's advice, he was put away as a wicked person; but, having his Restoration and Salvation in view, they were directed so to conduct themselves as to prevent the Offender from being swallowed up of over-much sorrow, through the devices of Satan,—Under this treatment, a scandalous backslider was brought back to Zion, and became the subject of Apostolic Joy. This is New-Testament discipline. —A modern christian has spoken unadvisedly, or been entangled among the Cares & Temptations of this World to his hurt,—instead of *immediately* administering the *Admonitions* of brotherly love, his brethren are reserved,—he is suffered silently to withdraw from the accustomed exercises of devotion,—neglect wounds his spirit, and some severe censure is circulated, by certain *tattlers, busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not*, till, with aggravated harshness, it meets his ear: he resents this improper conduct in his brethren, instead of lamenting his own, and from henceforth his heart is estranged; perhaps he forsakes the Companions of his Spiritual youth, and wanders, as a bird from her nest, still more and more astray, or drags on for years in a forlorn, despised, unpitied state of Mind, a compound of distrust, indifference, resentment, and distress. This, on some occasions, is Modern Practice.

Brethren, suffer a word or two more on this topic, for if a Man should bring any of our Churches into such a state as shall lead Offenders to say *Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a* KINDNESS, even he shall be called *the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.* What makes an offending Believer so unwilling that any brother should notice the Offence? We fear such a state of mind arises frem the harsh, censorious *manner* in which some Professors speak of others failings; as if it were a higher pleasure to them to exhibit a backslider in a state of shame and degradation, than to blend with Christian faithfulness, compassion and kindness towards a fallen Brother. We are sensible that in many instances this is not the case; there are Churches in which the evil and the

good, the froward and the kind, receive a like treatment! But this is the worst of wrongs. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* Good John Bunyan likens a portion of the believer's way to a narrow path, having a ditch on the one side, and a quag on the other. If a believer falleth into either, shall any brother suffer him there to lie as long as he please, or help himself out as well as he can? Is not every hand to be reached out to deliver him from the Mire? In many Instances, Individual admonition has been attended with the best effect, where this faileth, let Compassion and Prayer, and Counsel go hand in hand; peradventure united Efforts may restore a backslider to penitence, purity, and comfort. Indulge not a thought of leaving a brother or a sister in a fault, till every Effort, pity and love can devise, has been tried in vain. After every other endeavour has been fruitless, one last recourse is left, *that* too has *Salvation*, not *Destruction* for its object: obstinate offenders must be excluded, that the Church may be blameless; *and that the judgment of Christians concerning their state and Character may urge evil doers to serious thought, to penitence, and a return to God.* But, in order to this, wrath and bitterness must have no place in a Church's proceedings, no one must be preferred before another, nor any thing done through partiality: the *manner* and the *time* of separation must shew *that Charity* which would gladly welcome a return to Piety and Peace. This spirit of meekness and love, in dealing with Offenders, is urged upon every Christian Society by the Consideration that they also are in the body, and consequently subject to those inroads of folly and guilt so frequently to be lamented, as attendant on the present state. *As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them.*

Select Sentences.

"Judge not of God's love by providences, but by promises."

"A believer studies more how to adorn the cross than how to avoid it."

"Nature can afford no balm fit for Soul-cure: healing from duties, and not from Christ, is the most dangerous disease."

THOMAS WILCOX.*

*Mr. Thomas Wilcox was a worthy Baptist Minister. He lived in London, in times of great trouble, and suffered much from persecution for conscience sake. He used to wish, if it were God's will, that his death might be sudden, and the Lord gave him his desire. His usual saying was, "Sudden death, sudden glory." Which words were his epitaph, on his tomb in Bunhill Fields. He died May 17th, 1617, in the 67th year of his age. He was Author of the "Drop of Honey, from the Rock Christ," which was republished by the late Mr. Romaine.

Obituary.

Miss ANNING.

To the Editor,

If you think it will be for the Redeemer's Glory to insert the following account in your Magazine, it is at your service.

Catherine Anning was the only daughter of a respectable farmer in the Parish of Culmstock, Devon. She was universally esteemed for her amiable, industrious and prudent conduct, and especially for her dutiful behaviour towards her aged parents. For a considerable time she frequently attended at the Baptist Meeting at Prescott. Her last illness commenced in the beginning of October last, she felt no bodily pain, but very great weakness, which increased to the time of her death. She was not ill more than ten or eleven days, nor was she confined to her bed half that time.

A few days before she had mentioned having received serious impressions under the word more than once. First, at the opening of a methodist chapel, where several sermons were preached: but this soon wore off. Again, on the 26th of September last, she attended at Prescott, where I had been requested to preach a funeral sermon for a child, and I spoke from James iv, 14. *For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* At this time she was so deeply affected, that she shed many tears, and spoke of it to her father in the evening. (This was the last time she attended public worship, being afterwards prevented by her mother's indisposition.) But this also proved like the morning dew, it disappeared in less than a week. She expressed great sorrow that both this and the former impression wore off.

However, after she was taken ill, the Lord was pleased to renew his work in a more effectual manner. Then she was not only convinced of sin, but was enabled to give good evidence of her heart being changed and truly converted to God. Soon after the beginning of her illness she was observed to read the scriptures with peculiar seriousness, and her cheeks bedewed with tears. Continuing daily to grow weaker, medical assitance was called in, and her case was pronounced dangerous. By this time she felt most deeply concerned for the salvation of her soul, and the necessity of applying to a spiritual Physician. She was awakened to a sense of her lost state as a guilty and helpless sinner, and that she was unable to save herself. This was on Saturday, having been ill from the Monday. But now her inward distress and the anguish of her soul became almost insupportable. She acknowledged herself to be a great and a lost sinner, unless the Lord would have mercy upon her. Thus she continued on that and the succeeding day. On the Sabbath several friends spoke to her and prayed with her, and were much pleased to see her so sensible of her state as a sinner, and so willing to be taught the way of salvation. But she was not yet able to find rest for her soul.

On the Monday (which was one week after her being taken ill) it pleased the Lord to display his sovereign mercy, so as to enable her to come with all her sins to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to rest her soul upon the all-sufficiency

of his grace. Now that *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, was pleased to *shine in her heart, to give her the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. She now expressed her desire to converse with me, and I was sent for accordingly. I found her extremely weak, supported in the arms of her father; and her weeping friends and relatives around the bed, as if taking their last farewell. She appeared in the perfect exercise of her reason, seriously composed, and in a most heavenly frame of mind. She spoke very freely, tho' we had never conversed on religious subjects before. She first signified her wish to be buried in the Baptist burying-ground at Prescott, and requested I would preach her funeral sermon from the words she had heard the last time she was at meeting. She said she hoped her affliction would be blessed to many. She wished the young people might be particularly addressed on that occasion, in the most impressive manner. She said she was very weak in body but very comfortable in mind: so comfortable, that she thought she could sing, and did sing,

Salvation! O the joyful sound!
'Tis pleasure to our ears;
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears.

It is remakable, her father says he never knew her attempt to sing before this day, yet, in the course of this day, she sung, at different times, several hymns. Being asked if she had no desire to live, if it pleased God to restore her? she answered, No, not the least; she now had no fear of death, for its sting was taken away: adding, I am patiently waiting for the call when I shall enter heaven and there sit down at the feet of Christ, and praise his name in nobler strains, singing hallelujah to my king. she appeared very happy the whole of the day, engaged in pious ejaculations and fervent prayers. At different times she expressed herself in the following words, mostly in Scripture language. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Whilst I live, I will praise the Lord, yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God. Like as the Hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God.* She exhorted all her friends to *seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him, while he is near.* I paid her another visit the same day in the evening, and enquiring if she still felt happy? she replied in the affirmative. I asked, Is Christ precious to you? she said, O yes, I feel he is very precious. She then requested me to pray with her, which having done, she added, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, why do thy chariot wheels tarry so long?* This was the last time I saw her, and these were some of the last words I heard from her. But she continued to express herself in language of the same nature, the greatest part of that night.

To the astonishment of all around her, on Tuesday Morning early, she appeared greatly recovered, and said she was brought back from death unto life, and seemed to expect she should live; but continued in the same happy frame of mind as on the preceding day, and observed, that if it pleas-

ed the Lord to restore her, she had now a great work to attend to, and hoped she should never forget what the Lord had done for her. This day she desired not to be disturbed with any company, as she felt disposed to rest. And continuing better for that and the following day, her friends flattered themselves she would be restored to them. But on Wednesday Night she became very restless, and at intervals quite insensible. She was not heard to say any thing more about dying, and for some time before her departure, she uttered not a word. She lived thro' the night, and between eight and nine o'clock on Thursday morning (the 13th of October) she expired without a struggle or a groan, in the 23rd year of her age.

She was buried on the 19th, and a sermon on the occasion was preached at Prescott on the Lord's day following, from the words she had requested, to a very numerous and attentive audience. This was but one month from the time she had heard the sermon from the same words herself, and was then as likely to live as any in the Congregation.

Many, who are acquainted with the foregoing Circumstances, are constrained to say, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* May the perusal thereof be a blessing to your readers, and especially to the rising generation, is the fervent prayer of

Culmstock. *B. T.*

Mr. THOMAS ANGUS.

Nov. 24. 1808. died Mr. Thom. Angus, Printer, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, aged 31 years. He lost his Father by a decline when he was but 9 years of age, and then the eldest of five children. At a proper period he succeeded with his Mother to the business, in which capacity he was universally respected by all his acquaintance. He had been a husband but two years before death made him a disconsolate widower; nor had he lamented this stroke many months when the wound was opened afresh by the loss of his only sister at home. After the death of his sister, last March, he himself began to feel the seeds of mortality sown within him, which grew and advanced upon him, with slow but irresistable power. Upon this he retired into the country, and diligently attended to every means that it was conceived might relieve him; but nothing had any lasting effect. The hope indulged upon seeing him cheerful and pleasant to-day was blasted by his depression and pain to-morrow; and the smile just observed on the countenance of his friends in answering our enquiries, was now removed, and a tear made known his deepening complaints, which repelled every prescription of the Physicans, and proved too powerful for their utmost skill.

Despairing of recovering, he returned to his Mother's house at Newcastle, in August last. This situation was now very desirable, as it rendered him the immediate object of the attention of his friends and especially of his anxious Mother, whose watchful care and tenderness, smoothed the rugged path of his remaining journey, as he expressed it, and even in a measure "made it sweet to die."

Mr. Pengilly, the Baptist Minister of Newcastle, was introduced to him, who continued his visits with unwearied diligence to the last. The conversation that past between them was on all occasions interesting, but the limits I have pre-

scribed myself will permit but a short account. Mr. P. at first apologized for the enquiries he felt it his duty to propose, and for the faithful and ingenuous manner in which he should converse with him,—adding that Mr. A's circumstances and the momentous subjects which their conversation would involve, utterly forbid the contrary. Mr. A. wished him to be faithful, and in describing his state, told him, he had long attended regularly the ministry of the gospel, and had frequently viewed the Lord's table with desire; but being naturally of great diffidence, and no one taking him by the hand, what he regarded as his duty with the utmost conviction, was delayed till it was too late. Mr. P. owned it was a subject of just regret, and endeavoured to deepen the impression, not only by viewing deficiencies, but actual sins, which in him and in all characters, however unimpeachable by men, were still numerous and aggravating before God. He then strove to remove the false props upon which persons of respectable character are too prone to depend, and to set forth the foundation laid by the Prophets and Apostles as the only *sure foundation* upon which any man can rest with safety. He soon perceived a deep humiliation before God, an utter rejection of all false hopes and refuges, with a simple and implicit reliance on the merits of Christ.

In several after visits Mr. P. sought and uniformly found, the evidences of vital Christianity, and now diligently laboured to promote his peace and joy by exhibiting the infinite fulness, ability, and love of Christ, in which he was interested; and to prevent, as much as possible the dread of death, as also to promote a willing submission to the divine will. Mr P. read Pearce's letters in his last illness, in which the benefits of affliction, an ardent desire to depart and be with Christ, and a blissful *hope of glory* are most impressingly described. This had a good effect. We all saw in Mr. A, as his time drew near, an increasing joy and hope in Christ, as well as deadness to all sublunary objects.

To Mr. P's usual question if he felt his mind comfortable in his prospects, he as frequently replied, "quite happy"—and respecting his confidence in the all-sufficiency of the Redeemer, he answered, "stronger and stronger," His strength in the outer man fast failing him, he took to his bed intirely. His devotion was noticed by all around him, while his patience and submission in his severe pains, astonished every one that visited him. Four visits of Mr. P. finished their pleasing and useful acquaintance.

Nov. 17. He found Mr. A. remarkably serene—waiting his dismission which he was confident would be his infinite gain. I hope, Sir, (said Mr. P.) the name of the Redeemer is a pleasant sound; he replied, with a feeble voice, O yes, O yes, O yes. The 19th he appeared very low—almost exhausted by coughing and want of rest, and oppressed by phlegm, which he had not strength to expectorate. Still his prospects were clear and *in patience he possessed his soul.*

The 21st he discovered every sign of his approaching departure, while the enemy exercised *his great wrath, knowing he had but a short time.* When he had watered his mouth to facilitate his articulation, he told Mr. P. there are some things which rest upon my mind, and occasion great de-

pression, especially the neglect of family prayer, the reading of the scriptures, &c.—Too often have I been remiss when my duty was plain before me. Mr. P. observed that in reviewing their lives the most eminently pious have found sad reasons to acknowledge themselves *unprofitable servants*, but suggested, that God having forgiven him, and promised that He would *remember them no more*, he ought rather to cherish a cheerful hope, than give way to depressions arising from painful recollections. Still, I hope, Sir, added Mr. P. you see sufficient merit, grace, and power in Christ for you—commensurate, and more than commensurate with all that you have to demand their exercise? In a moment he replies, as with renewed joy of faith, Yes; and not only for me, but, if it were possible, for a thousand worlds. After prayer he expressed himself quite happy, and ardently desirous of being with Christ. The 23rd. Mr. P. called again. His breathing now was the only sign of existence. Nevertheless he replied with a voice exceedingly low, 'in misery in the body, yet in peace of mind—relying entirely upon *the precious blood of Christ*—Heaven will make amends for all my pain—yes, in one moment.' He now took his farewell of Mr. P. praying that every blessing might rest upon him, and thanking him for his attention.

After this he lay a few hours in frequent devotions—serene and calm, tho' passing thro' deep waters, and torturing pains. Feeling at length the earthly house falling, he said to his friends around him, 'I am going,' and presently taking his Mother by the hand, and looking upwards, with inexpressible ardor, cried, 'O Jesus come.' this was the last he was heard to say: after which he lay a little and fell asleep to awake no more 'till the resurrection of the just.

Three things are taught us by the foregoing narrative.

1. That it is dangerous to neglect union with Christ's Church and people when that union appears our duty—that natural diffidence and *all* objections should be overcome at the conviction of conscience.

2. That ministers and members of churches should be *watching for souls*, and be sure that there are none in the congregation waiting for some to say, as faithful Moses to Hobab, *Come thou with us and we will do thee good.*

3. Sincere repentance and humble faith in Christ are *never* disappointed. His words here, as in innumerable instances are verified, *him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* *N. T.*

ACCOUNT OF RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS.

Errors respecting Unitarianism considered; and Motives and Means for the Dissemination of it stated. *A Discourse delivered at Bristol, June 22, 1808, before the Society of Unitarian Christians, established in the West of England, for promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue by the Distribution of Books. By Lant Carpenter, L L. D.*

This discourse, printed at the desire of the Society to whom it was preached, discovers considerable abilities, which we regret to see thus applied. Our attach-

ment to *the Truth as it is in Jesus* leads us to regard this performance as generally void of Gospel Principle and decidedly hostile to the testimony of divine revelation. It is a deliberate, subtle, determined, and confident defence of a System in which the *Grace* of the Gospel has no place. It attempts to dig an everlasting grave for the most invaluable parts of Christian Truth, and to deprive the awakened sinner of every consolation that his just views of sin will permit him to receive.

The text is John xviii, 37. *To this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.* After an introduction, in which we have Dr. C's views of the primary end of Christ's appearance in the world—of the chief doctrines preached by the Apostles—of the duty of christians to imitate them in the diffusion of christian truth —and the unitarian creed respecting Christ and his work; the plan of the discourse is given. 1. To consider those errors into which many have fallen respecting the religious belief of unitarians. 2. To produce the motives which should induce unitarians to disseminate their tenets. 3. To determine the means by which this may be effected.

Under the first division he says, We are regarded as lightly esteeming the Scriptures; as laying the chief stress upon external virtue without regarding holiness of heart as essential to the christian character; as attempting to lower as much as possible the rank and dignity of our Lord, systematically rejecting some of his titles; as possessing a system of morals in which love to Jesus has no existence, and a system of religion that provides no remedy for the repenting sinner, and leaves out the character of Christ as a saviour.

Under the second, he urges that if it is the duty of every believer in Jesus to spread the knowledge and practice of the gospel by all his means; it must surely be his duty to spread it, as it really is, without any extraneous additions; that religious truth has a close connection with practice; that the exertions of their opponents, in diffusing *their* principles are arduous, and call for similar efforts.

Under the third, Unitarians are recommended, 1. To a total separation from trinitarian worship, and to form societies in which no ambiguous phraseology shall be admitted, but *strict caution* be observed that the prayers, hymns, and every part of the worship be *strictly* unitarian. 2. To the distribution of Books, which shall be thoroughly cleansed from all opinions in any wise derogatory to the unitarian faith, and here Dr. C. takes occasion to congratulate his hearers on the publication of a new version of the New Testament, by which he doubts not that the prevalence of their sentiments will be greatly accelerated.

In this plan, and in the conclusion are many abstract truths which we cordially approve; but their application to the support and diffusion of Socinian principles we as cordially condemn. Our limits will not allow us to animadvert *upon all* the anti-scriptural notions we have found in these pages, we can only notice a few, which give a kind of prominent character to the work.

In the introduction we are informed that *to declare the truth which he had heard from God was the primary object of our Lord's coming into the world*, and that *his death was merely a testimony to the truth.* Doubtless Dr. C. considered his text appropriate to such as-

sertions, but of this we feel assured that nothing short of great ignorance of the contents of the sacred volume, or great contempt for its authority, can lead any one to adopt his opinions. His seductive silence about those parts of scripture which mention other objects of the mission, coming, and sufferings of our Lord, is a practical instance of his want of respect for the *testimony of God concerning his Son.* It is using it merely to serve a turn. Is it not emphatically said *Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil?* Surely not merely by teaching truth and dying for it! for then prophets, apostles, and martyrs have done the same. Did not Daniel predict that he should *bring in everlasting righteousness?* Did not Christ himself declare that *he came to fulfil the law?* and has not Paul assured us that BY HIS OBEDIENCE *many shall be made righteous?* Did not the Redeemer testify—*I came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to lay down my life a ransom for many?* Had not the prophet asserted as much long before, *Is.* liii, 5, 6, and 10? and are we not warranted by the apostle's reasoning to the *Hebrews* ix, 26, 28, to consider this at least as one chief end of his coming in the flesh? Dr. C's hearers may not be accustomed to search the Scriptures; but it requires some front to tell the world in print, and that in the face of the above-cited passages, and hundreds more of the same import, that our Lord's primary object had no necessary connection with either suffering or atonement.

The account of apostolic preaching, page 4 & 5, and a kind of unitarian creed in page 6, harmonize very well with the assertions before mentioned, and are equally remote from the *whole* truth. The criminality of such a conduct arises from the circumstance that Dr. C's hearers and readers are intitled to the whole truth, and he professes to declare it. In a note, page 30, we are told Christ is said to be the propitiation for our sins, because he revealed pardon, and the means of obtaining divine favour! Then the apostles are intitled to the same honour, for they also revealed these things. Surely it will not be suggested that Christ claims distinction in this respect because he first proclaimed forgiveness; for we recollect a prophet, who declared, centuries before Christ, *Let the wicked forsake his way—and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Of the Scriptures, it is evident, Dr. C. entertains a very low opinion. We quote his own words,

"What I imagine to be the general sentiments among Unitarians on this point, are, that the Books of the New Testament contain a faithful record of inspired doctrine, or, in other words, of the revelation of the will of God communicated to mankind by Jesus Christ, either directly or through his Apostles; that where the writer relates the words of others, he was under no supernatural guidance, though the speaker might have been, and in many instances doubtless was; that where the writer employs his own words, he either records fact which he had seen or heard, or delivers opinions which either were the result of the natural exercise of his mental powers, or were formed in consequence of supernatural communications. p 2. 10.

So the Old Testament is not a divine revelation, and the Prophets were not inspired! If they were, why are they wholly omitted in this account of unitarian sentiments respecting Inspiration? Peradventure we have here another instance of Socinian *management.* Dr. C. might find it convenient to throw certain Prophets

into the back ground, lest, if their writings were read in public worship, he might not find it easy to avoid all "phraseology" that does not *strictly* comport with Socinian sentiments.

The account here given of New Testament writers leads to destroy all confidence in what they advance; unless, indeed, every man had in his house an enlightened socinian, who, by his *sound criticism, valuable manuscripts*, and *pure version*, would point out to him what are interpolations; what mere human opinions; and what divine communications. If, as he avers, the sacred writers were under no supernatural guidance, when relating the words of others, how are we sure that they have faithfully and correctly related them? If, when they record facts, they are *merely* such as they have seen or heard, without any supernatural influence to direct them to true reports, how can we depend on what they say? And if some of their doctrines are mere human opinions, and others divine inspirations, who is to inform us how to distinguish? Especially as every one may not have the same implicit confidence in Socinian guides which this writer appears to have: witness, his long note, page 54—57.

Our readers shall have a specimen of Dr. C's logic.

I do not say that upon the unitarian tenets, Jesus can be considered as our Saviour in the same light in which he is considered on the satisfaction system; If the application of the term Saviour to the Father is independent, as of course all will allow, of vicarious sufferings, and rests upon his being the primary Author of the Christian scheme of salvation, then we have a full right to infer, unless something can be shewn to the contrary, in the scriptural usage of the term, that the application of it to Jesus is independent of all vicarious sufferings, and rests upon similar grounds; that is that he was the Mediator, or means of communication, of that scheme. p 31, 32.

Notwithstanding this degradation of the Mediatorial Character into a mere means of communication, we cannot perceive the conclusiveness of the argument. May not the Father be the Saviour in one sense, and Christ in another? Suppose the british armies now in Spain had delivered that country from the iron grasp of a remorseless tyrant? might it not be said the british nation saved them, and with equal propriety, the british army saved them? the former by providing and sending an army, and the latter by actual fighting and victory.

Candour is a great favourite with Socinians. Surely those who claim so much from others, should exhibit a little themselves. We quote an example.

The inordinate stress which is laid upon faith (without including obedience as the gospel always does when it makes it a condition of final salvation) I consider as one of the most destructive, and *most prevalent* of those opinions which our views of Christianity reject. page, 37.

That there exists a few ignorant and wicked men, in this kingdom, who preach faith, and are silent about practical righteousness, we do not deny, but we do deny that this is a *most prevailing opinion* among the opponents of Socinianism in general, or among the Calvinists in particular. We affirm constantly that faith without works is dead. This passage is therefore a most notorious slander, unworthy a gentleman, or a christian. Indeed, the merits of the two Systems (Calvinistic and Socinian) as it respects their moral tendency, have been settled so much to the satisfaction of the friends of vital godliness, by the pen of the Rev. A. Fuller, that we wonder any prudent Socinian should set foot on that ground

again. Even Dr. C. acknowledges that few of the *religious world* have adopted unitarian views. By this concession, after all, it seems there lurks a kind of consciousness in his mind that *the religious world*, and *professors of unitarian sentiments*, are very distinct classes of people.

But we suspect that by "the inordinate stress laid upon faith" a stigma was intended to be fixed on those who give faith its proper place in the christian System: for the writer complains that "it leads to the denial of christian holiness in all in whom what is considered as christian faith is not found." That Calvinists in general do deny that Socinians possess christian holiness, is a fact we never wish to see disowned. For, if *Christ was made a sin-offering for us*—if *in his own body he bore our sins upon the accursed tree*—if *his blood was shed for the remission of sins*—if *we have redemption thro' his blood*—if *by his obedience many are made righteous*—if *without him we can do nothing*—if *to as many as believe in him, to* THEM *he giveth power to become the children of God*; if all these are not only scriptural doctrines, but indubitable facts, then whatever system rejects these, must also reject the feelings and affections that flow from them: and whatever feelings and affections the votaries of that system may acquire, you may call them *refinements* if you please, and the conduct that results from it may be *moral, dignified, or benevolent*, if you will, but *neither* can with any propriety, be denominated CHRISTIAN HOLINESS. † We fear not to avow our belief that christian holiness results from feelings to which not only a Socinian's heart, but every heart of man must be a stranger, till brought to submit to the righteousness of God manifest in the flesh, and to feel the constraining power of divine love. *Men do not gather grapes off thornes, nor figs oy thistles.*

As Dr. C. proposed to set the unitarian scheme in a proper light, we did hope to receive information respecting some particulars which have been generally kept in the shade. But we are completely disappointed. We cannot collect his sentiments respecting gospel holiness, tho' he has once and again written something "about and about it." (page 18, 23, 24) A paragraph on the love due to Jesus we read over several times; we admired it, as we did the painted glass in Exeter Cathedral, it is *fine* enough, we cannot say so much for its transparency.

After all, what Dr. C. calls errors respecting unitarianism, we think are substantial facts, and the charges remain in full force; for if he has done any thing, he has fully confirmed them; and every true believer who reads his sermon will thank God that he *has not so learned Christ.*

A General View of Opinions and Evidence on the Mode, Subjects, and History of Baptism: consisting of Extracts from various Authors, with observations and inferences.

† No man of real candour ought to be offended at this declaration. For if the sentiments Dr. C, supports are true, then the feelings that glowed in the bosom of a PEARCE, a THORNTON, a BRAINERD, and thousands more of whom the world was not worthy, were no ways allied to christian principles! That which constituted the basis of their character, must, in that case, have been idolatrous, fanatical enthusiasm, worthy only of our pity and abhorrence.

Addressed to Baptists and Pædobaptists. By Thomas Westlake, second edit. enlarged. Burditt, 2s.

It is true that the ordinance of Baptism has long been a subject of very extended discussion in various forms, and it is also true, that this discussion has, in common with many others, not always been conducted with that meekness of spirit and temper so often inculcated by the blessed founder of our religion; and so adorning to the Christian character. But it is vain and absurd, to make these circumstances a plea why the subject should not be discussed. If the most malignant and unhappy passions have been allowed to operate in former instances, and on that very account their success has not equalled the merit of the cause, let the effect be, not to put truth to silence, but folly to the blush: let it not create an indifference to the truth, but only stimulate us to a more unbiassed and dispassionate statement of it. Nor should any absurd or impious reflection, made on the unimportance of the subject before us, deter any one from the defence of truth. "Shall truth be silent, because folly frowns"? If it be important to regard the institutions of Christ, which, we apprehend, no one who has any pretensions to Christianity would chuse to deny, it must be important to regard them as he gave them, for otherwise, they are not his institutions, but mere human inventions. This remark may be deemed trite, but it is not the less forcible; and if this principle be once infringed upon, all the mummeries of popery, together with all antichristian practices whatever, need not despair of meeting with crowds of apologists, of apologists in those very men too, who would shudder at the idea, and who would avail themselves of every possible sophism to repel the charge.

If what has now been urged is just, so long as error shall exist, so long are we justified in opposing it, and it is a sufficient apology for every publication like the one before us, that there are those whom it may possibly benefit, for though prejudice may boast a very extended empire, yet its throne must finally tremble and fall, and the certainty of that desirable event, sufficiently vindicates every attempt to accelerate its approach.

Of Mr. Westlake's production we may observe, that its merit is that of a compilation, rather than of an original work. Indeed it is professedly "Extracts from various authors." But considered under this character, its merits are very considerable. The view it gives of the subject is comprehensive and concise, and the evidence it adduces though necessarily from the size of the work contracted, is yet sufficient for his purpose. Mr. Westlake appears to have made considerable research and we hope his labour will not be in vain in the Lord. Considering it therefore as an excellent compendium upon the Subject, we heartily recommend it to those for whom it is chiefly written, for it is designed "for the use of such persons as may not have leisure to turn over huge volumes of church history, or inclination to follow polemic writers through the dark maze of controversy." For the assistance of those who have neither money, leisure, nor desire to consult treatises of a more elaborate character on the subject, this little work will prove very advantageous. We would make some extracts, but as it contains a great deal of very interesting information, and its price is very moderate, we hope that from

this brief and general account of it, many will be induced to make it their own.

The Influence and Advantages of Religion; *exemplified in the History of Hannah and Samuel. adapted to the use of Societies instituted for the Relief of Lying-in Women.* Button, 3*d.* 1*l*s per 100.

Christian Philanthrophy seeks occasions to do good; and it is much to the honour of our country-women that there are numerous societies among them, formed to relieve those who in the depths of poverty have to contend with all the trying circumstances of Child-birth. This affords them the opportunity of serving the best interests of the objects of their benevolence: and when we consider the feelings natural to such a Situation, the recess from labour, and the leisure for a short time attendant thereon; perhaps there is no other season in the life of a poor Women, so favourable for inculcating religious truth.

The pamphlet above-mentioned is very well adapted to the purpose. The history of Hannah and Samuel is interspersed with suitable reflections calculated to excite the gratitude of the readers for whom it is intended, and these are connected with some well-pointed addresses to the conscience, which we hope will be extensively useful. We recommend it to the societies referred to, and to every pious Woman who visits the poor in their confinement, to see that this little tract be put into their hands.

Religious Books lately pnblished.

1. Harmer's Observations on Scripture, newly arranged and enlarged, by Dr. Clarke, 4 vol. 8vo. 2*l*. 8*s*.

2. Simpson's Plea, a new edition, 8vo, 8*s*.—12mo, 4*s*. 6*d*.

3. Strictures on two Critiques in the Edinburgh Review on the Subject of Methodism and Missions. In three letters to a friend. By John Styles, 8vo, 3*s*. 6*d*.

4. Two Sermons on Christian Zeal, and on the Progress of the Gospel, preached at Palgrave, Suffolk. By C. Lloyd, 8vo. 1*s* 6*d*.

5. Romaine's Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith, in 2 neat pocket volumes, 8*s*.

6. The converted Catholic, or History of Andrew Dunn, by Mr. Kelly, 8vo, 2*s*. 12mo. 1*s*

7. Geriadwr Ysgrythyrawl, or Scripture dictionary, in Welsh. An intire original Work, and the first of the kind in the British tongue. By the Rev. T. Charles, of Bala. vol. 2. price 8*s*. The third volume is in the press.

8. The necessity and usefulness of preaching predestination By W. Paul. 6*d*.

9. Memoirs of Mr. Heudebourck, of Taunton, by himself; with his funeral Sermon by his Grandson. 1*s*.

THEOLOGICAL NOTICES.

☞ Information of works in hand from Theological Writers will be inserted under this Article.

Proposals are in circulation for publishing by subscription the Practical Works of the Rev. Rich. Baxter, in 16 vols. 8vo. 10*s* 6*d* each *to subscribers.*

Mr. S. Drew (St. Austle, Cornwall) author of an Essay on the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, has in the press an Original Essay on the identity and

general resurrection of the human body. It will make a large 8vo. vol. 9*s to subscribers.*

Dr. Gill's exposition of the New Testament has been translated into Welsh, and is now in the course of publication.

The Rev. J. Robinson of Ravenstonedale is compiling a Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Dictionary; intended to comprise the Antiquities of the Hebrews, and to form a body of scripture history, geography, chronology, divinity, and ecclesiastical opinions.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

ENGLISH BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS.

The Association of Baptist Congregational Churches in OXFORDSHIRE and adjacent Counties, (which includes 10 churches) assembled at Bourton-on-the-water, *Gloucestershire,* on Tuesday the 31st of May last. After prayer by Mr. Draper *of C. Norton,* and an introductory address by Mr. Hinton, *of Oxford,* the letters from the churches were read, the contents of which increased their joy in the Lord, as they record the growing empire of our exalted Saviour, and afford a happy assurance, that while the tumult and devastation of War fill the kingdoms of this World with anxiety and wretchedness, the blessings of redeeming love convey peace and prosperity to all the happy Subjects of Immanuel. Mr. E. Smith *of Blockley,* gave an exhortation grounded on the Contents of the letters, and concluded with prayer. Afterwards the Ministers and Messengers assembled, the Circular Letter, written by Mr. E. Smith, *on a becoming spirit and behaviour in the House of God,* was read and ordered to be printed.

Wednesday, Mr. Stennett *of Coat,* preached from *Heb.* xii, 2. *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God.* and Mr. Thorpe *of Bristol,* from 1 *Tim.* i, 17. *Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* In the evening Mr. Hinton preached from *Rom.* viii, 38, 39. *For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Prayer at Intervals. The respective congregations were recommended to set apart the 26th of Sept. for humiliation and prayer, for the prosperity of our Country, the return of peace, and the general interests of religion in the World.

Thursday, The associate ministers met, after prayer, they communicated the most interesting Circumstances of their experience under the events of the past year, and Mr. Coles *of Bourton,* concluded by prayer the solemn and profitable services of the Association.

State of the Churches the preceding year. Added on a profession of faith, 61, Received by letter, 2, Died, 11, Dismissed, 10, Clear Increase, 42.

The next Association to be held at Witney, the 23rd and 24th of May next.

THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK Baptist Association (which includes 9 Churches) met at Bury St. Edmonds, *Suffolk*, in June last. Our venerable friend Mr. Hall (now in the 35th year of his ministry at Ipswich,) informs us that, by their letters it appeared considerable additions had been made to each Society, and they were in a happy measure peaceful and prosperous. The whole number of Members in 9 churches being 1581. We believe that many of these are new Interests, as it comes within our own knowledge that there was no religious Society at *Grundisburgh* about 14 years ago, though this Church is now the largest in the Association, having 389 Members: and we have been informed that in this and the neighbouring villages, upwards of 500 persons have been baptized in the last 10 years.

Since the above associate meeting, a new Church has been formed at Walton, in Suffolk, (a branch from Ipswich) and Mr. Meakin ordained over it.

State of the Churches the preceding year. Baptized, 117, Restored, 8, Received by letter, 6. Died, 12, Excluded, 29, Dismissed, 9. Clear Increase 81.

The NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Association of Baptist Churches (including 28 Societies) assembled at Olney, *Bucks*, June 7th 8th and 9th last.

Tuesday, after prayer by Mr. Sutcliff, the Letters from the Churches were read. With the exception of a few instances, the accounts therein were encouraging, scarcely any of the Churches had been unfruitful, nor had the adversary been permitted to sow discord among the brethren.

Wednesday, Mr. Jarman preached from *Luke* xvii, 5. *Lord increase our faith.* The assembly being much too large for the place, they adjourned to the Meeting-Yard, where Mr. Fuller preached from *Rom.* viii, 32, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* The Circular Letter, by Mr. Sutcliff, *on obedience to Positive Institutions*, was read to the Ministers and Messengers, and ordered to be printed.

The Churches at *Braybrook*, Northamptonshire, and at *Fenny Stratford*, Bucks, having sent letters of request, were admitted into the Association. Mr. Chase *of Godmanchester*, preached in the evening from *Eph.* ii, 5. *By grace ye are saved.* Prayer at Intervals.

Thursday, several of the ministers gave a brief account of their experience during the past year, and the public service was closed with prayer by Mr. Fuller.

State of the Churches the preceding year. Received by profession, 144, By letter, 21, Restored, 4. Died, 31, Dismissed, 22, Excluded, 19, Clear increase, 97.

The next Association to be held at Nottingham, the 23rd and 24th of May next.

The Baptist Churches constituting the MIDLAND Association (including 24 Churches) met at Evesham, June 7th and 8th last. Tuesday, after prayer by Mr. Butterworth, the Letters from the Churches were read, by which it appeared that they were in peace, the greater part of them in prosperous circumstances, and many who worshipped among them had been turned from darkness to light.

Wednesday, Mr. Butterworth read the Circular Letter on Christian Zeal, which was ordered to be printed. Mr. Kilpin *of Leominster* preached from *Rev.* iii, 22. *He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.* and Mr. Palmer *of Shrewsbury* from *Acts.* xxvi, 22, 23. *Having obtained help of God, we continue to this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, &c.* In the evening Mr. Bradley preached from *Isai.* xlv, 25. *And shall glory,* and concluded the services and the association by prayer.

At an adjourned Meeting the churches in this Association were recommended to make an annual Subscription or Collection for the support of the Baptist Mission.

State of the Churches in the year preceding. Baptized, 175, Received by letter, 10, Restored, 3. Died, 38, Dismissed, 13, Excluded, 32. Clear Increase, 105.

The next Association to be held at Cannon-Street, Birmingham, on the 23rd and 24th of May next.

There will be a Quarterly Meeting at Pershore, the 5th day of April next.

In consequence of four new Societies being formed in Shropshire, the Churches in that County have signified their intention to form a new Association.

The Baptist Churches of the WESTERN ASSOCIATION are 52 in Number. Their Assembly was held at Sodbury, Gloucestershire, the 8th and 9th of June last. Wednesday, after prayer by Mr. Smith *of Tiverton* the Letters from the Churches were read, awakening in the hearers, the mingled feelings of pleasure and pain. The instances of the Redeemer's care excited gratitude; tidings of peace and prosperity enlivened their joy: but they regretted that any instances to the contrary should exist. The Churches at Hanham and Keynsham, Watchett, Helstone, and Poole, were admitted into the Association. Mr. Saunders *of Frome* preached from *Matt.* xxv, 34, *Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World.*

Thursday, the fund money was received, and 152*l.* 15*s* was distributed to the most necessitous and laborious Ministers. More than 2000 people being assembled, the public services were conducted under an awning in the Burying-ground, where Mr. Saffery *of Salisbury* preached from 2 *Cor.* ii, 17. *In the sight of God speak we in Christ.* The Ministers and Messengers then retired to the Meeting-house, the Circular Letter, by Mr. Gray, *on the duties of Church Members,* was read and ordered to be printed. Mr. Taylor *of Calne* preached from *Isai.* lxii, 10, *Lift ye up a Standard for the people.* In the evening Mr. Coles *of Bourton* preached from *Acts* xix, 32. *The more part knew not wherefore they were come together,* and the exercises of the Association were concluded with prayer by Mr. Page.

State of the Churches the preceding year. Baptized, 412, Received by letter, 116, Restored, 7. Died, 95, Dismissed, 130, Excluded, 59, Clear Increase, 251.

The next Association to be held at Yeovil, the 24th and 25th of May next.

The YORKSHIRE Baptist Association includes 28 Churches, Their Assembly was held at Sheffield, the 22nd and 23rd of June last. We are informed that a con-

siderable revival has taken place in some of their Churches, tho' others complain of the want of zeal and spirituality. The Circular Letter, by Mr. Fawcett, *On the Nature and Extent of Christian Liberty*, has been since reprinted, and is worthy of general attention.

State of the Churches the preceding year. Baptized, about 200, Died, about 20, Excluded, 10, Clear Increase, 180.

Number of Baptisms in 151 associated Churches, in the year ending June, 1808, about 1109. Clear Increase, 756.

Associations among Protestant Dissenters being intirely voluntary Unions, our Readers are reminded that there are upwards of 300 Baptist Churches of the same faith and order in England and Wales (besides those in London) who are not united to any Association.

Nov. 16, 1808. A quarterly meeting of the Baptists were held at New-town, Montgomeryshire, On Tuesday evening Mr. Evans *of Doleu* prayed, Mr. Jones *of the Rook*, preached in english, and Mr. Thomas *of Nantgwyn* in welsh. Wednesday morning Mr. Evans *of Doleu* preached in english, J. Evans *of Maesyberllan* in welsh, and Mr. Palmer *of Shrewsbury* in english. In the evening Mr. R. Pryce *of Wrexham* preached in english, Mr. Jones in welsh, and Mr. Palmer in english.

Our correspondent adds, that the services were well attended, much of the divine presence was enjoyed. and the utmost harmony prevailed.

EAST HAM, ESSEX.

Mr. Sparkhall (a deacon of the Baptist Church at Old-Ford) having hired, and duly registered a part of a house in this large village, a solemn meeting of prayer was held, on Tuesday afternoon, Jan. 3rd. 1809. in which Mr. Gold of West-Ham, Mr. Newman of Old Ford, Mr. Parker of Barking, and Mr. Smith of Ilford, with several other friends, united. In the evening, Mr. Gold delivered a very interesting sermon from *Acts* xvi, 9. *Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* The congregation thronged the place, and their eager attention was highly gratifying. A committee was formed, and measures were taken to continue the lecture (if the Lord's will) every Tuesday evening. It is remarkable that Mr. Gold preached in the same house, thirty-four years ago: but very few are now living of those who then heard him. This is the third attempt of the kind. May the great head of the Church smile upon it.

RECENT DEATH.

Friday, January 6th, died the Rev. Mr. Rymer, Rector of Littleham near Exmouth, Devon. He was a very pious, godly man; highly respected by good men of various persuasions; while, at the same time, he was most bitterly persecuted by a great number of his own community.

UNITED MEETING OF PRAYER,

FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL AT HOME AND ABROAD,

To be held in BRISTOL, 1809.

Time.	*Place.*	*Time.*	*Place.*
Jan. 2,	Broadmead.	July 3.	Lady Huntingdon's.
Feb. 6,	Ebenezer.	Aug. 7,	Bridge Street.
Mar. 6,	Bridge Street.	Sept. 4,	Portland Castle.
Apr. 3,	The Pithay.	Oct. 2,	Broadmead.
May 1,	Castle Green.	Nov. 6,	The Pithay.
June 5,	Tabernacle.	Dec. 4,	Castle Green.

To begin at *Seven* o' Clock, in the Evening.

'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let the canopy of thy habitation be extended:

'Spare not—lengthen thy cords, and firmly fix thy stakes:

'For on the right hand and on the left, thou shalt burst forth with increase:

'And thy seed shall inherit the nations, and they shall inherit the desolate cities.'

BRISTOL MONTHLY LECTURE, 1809.

Time.	*Place.*	*Preacher.*	*Subjects.*
Jan. 10, Tu.	Bridge Str.	Mr. Page.	*On the privilege of Adoption.*
Feb. 16, Th.	The Pithay.	Mr. Thorp.	*Historical View of the Incarnation.*
Mar. 16, Th.	Castle Gr.	Mr. Lowell.	*Justification by Faith.*
Apr. 12, W.	Tabernacle.	Mr. Roberts.	*On Behalf of the Tract Society.*
May 16, Tu.	Broadmead.	Tab. Minis.	*Evidences of Genuine Concern for the Divine Glory.*
June 13, Tu.	Bridge Str.	Dr. Ryland.	*Nature and Importance of good Works.*
July 13, Th.	The Pithay.	Mr. Page.	*Prophecies respecting the Messiah.*
Aug. 15, Tu.	Broadmead.	Mr. Thorp.	*Supreme Importance of the Sufferings of Christ.*
Sept. 14, Th.	Castle Gr.	Tab. Minis.	*Necessity of Constant Watchfulness.*
Oct. 11, W.	Tabernacle.	Mr. Lowell.	*Christian Meekness.*
Nov. 14, Tu.	Bridge Str.	Mr. Roberts.	*Jacob's Dream.*
Dec. 14, Th.	The Pithay.	Dr. Ryland.	*Inward Witness to Christianity.*

To begin at *Seven* o' Clock in the Evening.

The Managers would feel obliged to their friends, having lists of London Lectures, &c. to communicate them to our Publishers.

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